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A  
Manual of Confirmation.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN,

HEADMASTER OF RUGBY SCHOOL,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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# A Manual of Confirmation,

COMPRISING

- I.—A General Account of the Ordinance.
- II.—The English Order of Confirmation, with Short Notes, Critical and Devotional.
- III.—Meditations and Prayers on Passages of Holy Scripture, in connection with the Ordinance.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN,

HEADMASTER OF RUGBY SCHOOL,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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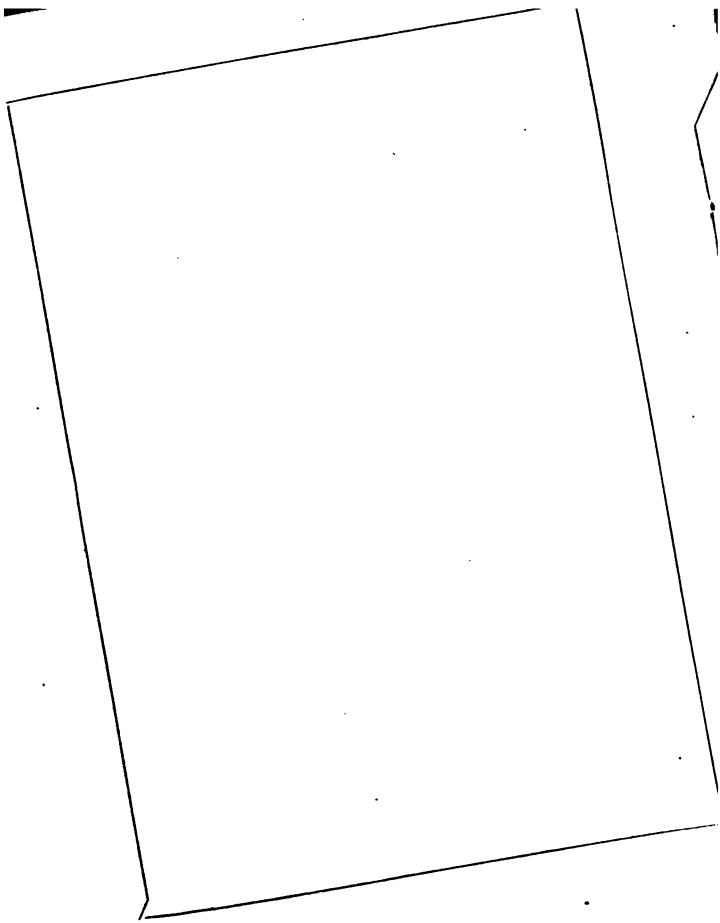
I.

A General Account

OF THE

ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION.





A GENERAL ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION.

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§ I. *Its* (1). WE read (Acts ii.) that the Holy  
*ground in* Ghost descended upon the Apostles on  
*Holy Scrip-* the day of Pentecost, and that, as the  
*ture.* result of this descent, they were endowed  
with a miraculous power of speaking with other  
tongues, v. 4. But it must be carefully observed  
that this miraculous endowment was but a small, and  
comparatively unimportant, effect of the Comforter's  
descent. That great event transformed them in-  
stantaneously from ignorant disciples, dull of appre-  
hension, and timid in the hour of trial, into wise  
teachers, on whom the Scheme of Salvation had  
dawned in all its beauty and harmony, and into  
steadfast maintainers of the Truth, at the risk of all  
which the world holds most dear. For the proof of

this assertion, compare Luke xviii. 34, and many parallel passages, where they manifest an absolute incapacity to receive the doctrine of a Messiah glorified through suffering, with St. Peter's addresses, (Acts ii. and iii.) where he recognises every stage of our Lord's career as a fulfilment of prophecy, and implies that his death, though brought about by the instrumentality of man, had been foreordained in the counsels of God, (Acts iii. 18.) Also compare the fact that upon our Lord's apprehension "all the disciples forsook him and fled," with the resolute and determined attitude, which they assume in the early part of the Acts, and specially the circumstance of St. Peter's denial with his answer to the Sanhedrim in iv. 19—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things, which we have seen and heard." Hence we conclude that in addition to the miraculous gifts then conferred upon them (and which no longer remain in the Church), a great moral and spiritual change passed upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

(2). But it was not designed that the Apostles alone should partake of the outpouring of the Spirit. All believers, of whatever rank or station ("sons and daughters, young men and old men, servants and handmaidens," Acts ii. 17, 18.) were to be sharers of the mighty Boon. The regular method of its transmission, was to be through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, after the administration of Baptism. In one remarkable instance, indeed,—that of Cornelius,—the gift was conferred even previously to Baptism, (Acts x. 44—47.) But this was an exception to the ordinary course of proceeding, the design of which was to warrant St. Peter in administering Baptism to one of Gentile descent, which else, as being under the influence of Jewish prejudices, he might have been backward to do. (It may also teach us generally that God, though He commonly works through Ordinances, is not tied to them.) The regular method of proceeding is fully indicated in the case of the Samaritans, (Acts viii. 14—17.) They hear the preaching of Philip, and are converted by it, they receive baptism from Philip the Deacon, and then the higher

Authorities of the Church are sent for to lay hands on them, that they may receive the Holy Ghost. The same plan is observed with the disciples at Ephesus (ch. xix. 5, 6.) They first receive Christian Baptism (from other hands, it would appear, than St. Paul's) and then, with the laying on of his hands, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." The miraculous effects being in these cases similar to those which followed on the day of Pentecost, we conclude that the ordinary moral and spiritual effects were also the same.

(3). We must not omit to notice the celebrated passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (vi. 1, 2.) where reference is justly supposed to be made to the Ordinance of Confirmation, as it existed in the Primitive Church. St. Paul is there urging Christian progress and growth in grace,—a leaving of the rudiments of religion, and a going on unto perfection. He mentions rudimentary Graces, rudimentary Ordinances, and rudimentary Doctrines. The Ordinances are "Baptisms and Laying on of Hands." The passage has difficulties, which should make us cautious

in explaining it; but it has been asked with great cogency, What can be this Imposition of Hands, which is spoken of as standing at the threshold of Christian Life, but that, by which the Apostles were in the habit of transmitting the Holy Spirit? This is made the more probable by the immediately succeeding context, in which mention is made of "being once enlightened" (Baptism was called *φωτισμός*, *enlightening*), "and being made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*."

(4). Briefly; we find that the laying on of hands after Baptism, united with prayer for the Holy Ghost, was accompanied with an increase of spiritual light and strength, and we see reason to think that this laying on of hands was the prerogative of the highest order in the Ministry.

The essentials then of Confirmation (as gathered from Scripture) are,

(1) *Laying on of hands.*

(2) *Prayer for the Holy Ghost.*

And probably (3) *Administration by a Bishop.*

From what has been said it will be evident that,

(a). We continue the outward sign in Confirmation, because there is reason to think that, while the miraculous gifts have ceased, the moral and spiritual effects remain. Thus in our retaining Confirmation, there is nothing inconsistent with our rejection of the anointing of the sick, prescribed by St. James (v. 14.) and practised by the Apostles (Mark vi. 13.) In this case the outward sign, being the symbol *merely* of a miraculous cure *which no longer exists*, has been rightly dropped.

(b). It is evident also that, so far as its Scriptural ground is concerned, Confirmation is altogether independent of the age of the recipient. It is not an ordinance for youth exclusively. The administration of it to persons fifteen or sixteen years old, belongs not to the *essence* of the Ordinance; but to the *form*, which a particular branch of the Church has given it.

(c). Lastly it is evident that Baptism and Confirmation present to us two distinct ideas, which may not be confounded.

Baptism makes disciples (*μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες*).

It is an admission into the School of Christ. Disciples there were, before there was any Church or organized society of believers; for Jesus (through his disciples) made and baptized more disciples than John, (John iv. 1, 2.) But these disciples, being as yet under the wing of their Master, and not being called upon to bear the brunt of that contradiction and opposition which He attracted to Himself, were yet *in statu pupillari*; they had not yet received the plenitude of Grace, Wisdom, and Power. This was a privilege reserved for them, when left alone to cope with the world, and to reduce it to the obedience of faith.

Again, Baptism is a grafting into the True Vine. Confirmation rather resembles the outpouring of precious dew and copious rain upon the vine branch, whereby it puts forth its leaves and fruits, and unfolds its latent powers.

Baptism is a passage from a state of heathen darkness to the light of Christian Privilege. Confirmation is a furnishing of the believer with arms, for the conflict with his spiritual antagonists.



All which considerations make it suitable and appropriate (though not essential) that Confirmation should be deferred to a period when the young heart is just beginning to be conscious of a struggle with the desperate wickedness inherent in it, when its mental and moral powers are expanding, and the first trial of life, with all its temptations and difficulties, lies before it.

§ II. *Its* (1). “It appears that in the primitive *History*. “Church, Confirmation followed immediately upon Baptism, if the Bishop were present to administer it, and this was the case whether the Neophyte were an infant or an adult. The Bishop anointed him with an unguent of oil and balsam, in token of the Holy Spirit, and laid his hands upon him after the example of the Apostles.”—(*Humphry’s Historical and Explanatory Treatise on the Common Prayer.*)

In fact, Confirmation was regarded as the completion of Baptism, and so not to be divorced from it in point of time, unless circumstances imperatively de-

manded such a severance. Nor, though it is doubtless more judicious to defer it, is there any thing in the administration of it to an infant, which need surprise or shock us. That infants are capable of receiving Divine Grace we admit by the fact of our baptising them, and it is to be remembered that Our LORD laid his hands on little children and blessed them, —a precedent which of itself may surely warrant the practice.

(2). The divorce of Confirmation from Baptism seems to have originated in the fact that the Bishop was often absent, when Baptism was administered. From this absence flowed two alternatives, one of which, it seems, was adopted by the Eastern, the other by the Western, branch of the Church.

Either the Presbyter (or Priest) might be authorised to administer Confirmation as well as Baptism, — in which case the two rites would still remain associated, —or the Baptised must wait for Confirmation, till the Bishop came to their district. The former course is to this day adopted by the Eastern Church, where Confirmation is administered by the Presbyter

immediately after Baptism. It would appear however, that the Imposition of hands has been dropped, and that the Ordinance of Confirmation in the East consists of prayer for the Holy Ghost, accompanied with the application of oil, (see Palmer's *Origines*, vol. ii. p. 201.) Bingham tells us, that "as to the " Imposition of hands in Confirmation, we find *that* " more universally and strictly reserved to the " Office of Bishops, than the use of the unction " was," (Antiquities, Book xii. chap. 2.) Whence perhaps the Presbyter was not considered at liberty to perform it without the special commission of the Bishop. The Western Church has adopted the other, and probably the sounder, alternative of deferring Confirmation, until the Bishop can administer it.

III. *The form which the Church of England has given to Confirmation.* (1). IT being the excellent design of our Reformers to purify the rites of the Church from all unauthorised adjuncts, which had grown up like parasitical plants around them, and to reduce Ceremonial to its primi-

tive chastity and simplicity, they discarded the ointment in Confirmation, the use of which, although it dates from the end of the second, or beginning of the third, century, has no sanction in the practice of the Apostles. In the first Protestant Book of Common Prayer, however, we find a trace of the ointment, which had been used before the Reformation, in the following prayer, "Confirm and strengthen them with the inward *unction* of thy Holy Ghost mercifully unto everlasting life." In the second book of Edward VI, published three years afterwards, this allusion is removed, and the present sentence of administration, "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace," makes its appearance for the first time.

(2) As to the age at which Confirmation should be ministered, it is most judiciously ordered to be, when children have come to years of discretion. The advantage of having some definite period of life, when men may make a solemn compact in their own persons with God and Christ, and ratify that contract by an act of unusual solemnity, cannot be overrated. Many Christians, when the fervour of

their first religious feelings was upon them, have attempted by some private transaction between themselves and God (such as a written bond or agreement), to create for themselves a sort of security against future back-slidings. The legitimate satisfaction of the instinct, which has prompted them so to act, is to be found in Confirmation. The person to be Confirmed comes before the assembled Church, before its chief Pastor, and above all before His mysterious Presence, Who, where two or three are gathered together in His Name, is in the midst of them. He there lays the whole of his heart at the Apostles' feet (woe be to him, if, like a second Ananias, he keeps back part of it by some mental reservation for sin and the world)—he subscribes with his hand to the Lord, makes public choice of His service, and enlists under His banner once for all, to follow it through evil report and good report, even to his life's end. What act can be more solemn, more obligatory, in the retrospect, and what more appropriate age can be selected for making this profession, than when, on the one hand,

the character is yet plastic and has not finally crystallised, and, on the other, the strength of evil passions and the allurements of worldly vanity are beginning to be felt, and the youth is becoming conscious of those mighty powers within and without him, which are drawing him with deep and strong current in a direction away from God. He stands upon life's threshold, and it is well surely that before crossing it he should put himself under the auspices of his Lord, should consciously seek, and consciously receive, the blessing and the strength, which alone can prosper his voyage over the waves of a troublesome world.

• § IV. *Why not a  
Sacrament.*

THE laying on of hands being an outward visible sign, which, to those who receive it in a right frame of mind, is accompanied by an inward Spiritual Grace, it is obvious to ask, what it is that distinguishes this Rite from a Sacrament?

The answer is, that Christ Himself did not ordain it—it was an institution of his Apostles.

Nor let this difference be thought trifling. We justly ascribe to the words and acts of the Incarnate God a higher dignity than to those even of inspired and infallible men. It is in accordance with this principle, that our Church recognises in the Gospels (as containing the words of Christ Himself,) a higher dignity than in the Epistles,—the Congregation being instructed to stand up, while the Gospel is read.

An interesting reason is given by Aquinas for Christ's not having instituted Confirmation Himself. "Because the Holy Ghost, which is herein to be communicated, was not given till after Christ's Ascension," John vii. 39. *Comber on the Confirmation Office.*

§ V. *The Name.* Down to the time of the Reformation, the Rite seems to have been called Chrism, a name which is retained by the Greek Church to this day. When the anointing was dropped, the name of course lost its applicability.

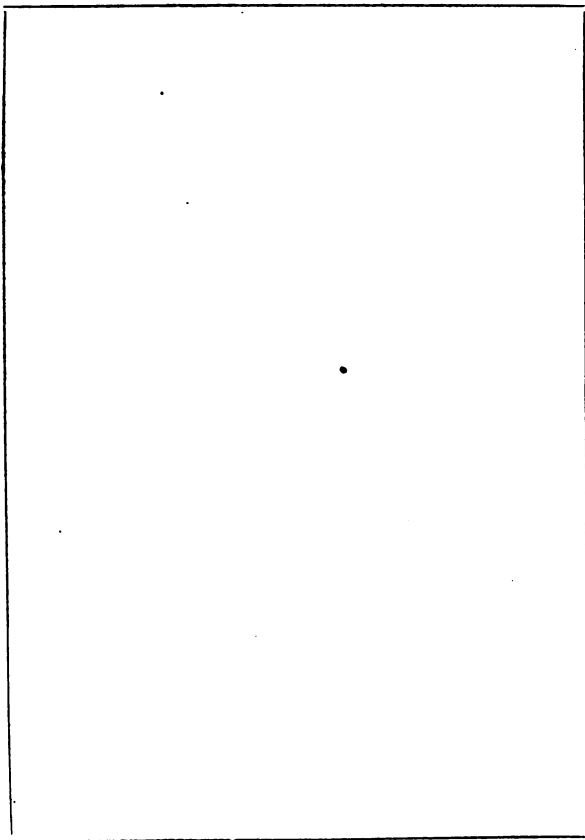
Another ancient name for the Rite is *σφραγίς*, *The Seal*. The reference is to St. Paul's words in

Eph. i. 13. "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Baptism is the Ordinance in which we confess our faith, and are placed under the Spirit's guidance. In Confirmation we are *sealed* by the Spirit, declared to be Christ's own people, and authenticated as His, by the descent upon us of Power from on high.

The name of *χειροθεσία* (*Imposition of hands*), which we have retained in the title of our Office, is also ancient.

The rite has the name of Confirmation, first, because in it we renew or confirm our Baptismal Vow, secondly, because, by means of it, we are ourselves confirmed in Grace.





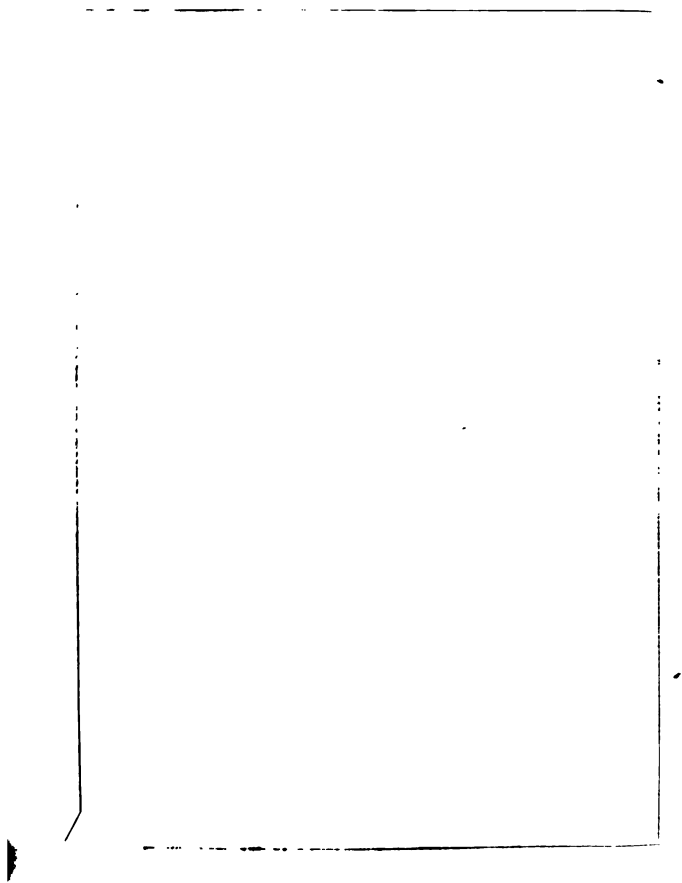
II.

THE

ENGLISH ORDER OF CONFIRMATION,

*With Short Notes,*

DEVOTIONAL AND CRITICAL.



## The Baptismal Vow.<sup>1</sup>

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I RENOUNCE<sup>2</sup> the devil<sup>3</sup> and all<sup>4</sup> his works, the pomps and<sup>5</sup> vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts<sup>6</sup> of the flesh.

Secondly, I believe all the Articles<sup>7</sup> of the Christian Faith.

And thirdly, I will<sup>8</sup> keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk<sup>9</sup> in the same all the days<sup>10</sup> of my life.

<sup>1</sup> All vows are promises, but all promises are not vows. A vow is a solemn promise made to God.

<sup>2</sup> To renounce means to declare antagonism or opposition to. The word *renounce* was substituted for *forsake* at the time the Catechism received its addition from Dean Overall in 1604, after the Hampton Court Conference. To *forsake* means to quit or give up. Now we do not *actually* forsake the devil, world, and flesh, at Confirmation, but *declare* our hostility to them.

3 The three great powers which draw man away from God are evil angels, (the devil), evil men (the world), evil self (the flesh). The first is the foe farthest off, the last the nearest and most intimate. Remember that in your baptismal vow you imply a firm belief in the power and influence of evil spirits, however little weight a sceptical age may attach to that doctrine.

4 All sins are works of the devil, but specially,

1 Falsehood, he having uttered the first falsehood, John viii. 44.

2 Enticing others into sin, he being called the tempter Matt. iv. 3.

3 Calumny, the word *devil* (*διάβολος*) meaning false accuser. See his false accusations of Job, ch. 1 and 2.

4 Murder, he having brought death into the world, John viii. 44.

5 Pride, it being uniformly supposed that by pride the Angels fell, Jude v. 6.

6 And, generally, sins with something of a splendid and attractive character in them, such as excuses them in the world's eye, it being the property of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light. 2 Cor. xi. 14.

5 By pomps is meant vain outward display (the original word means a procession) such as Hezekiah made of his riches, (Isaiah xxxix. 2-4.) Herod of his dress and eloquence, (Acts xii. 21.) David of the number of his people, (2 Sam. xxiv. 2, &c. &c.) Vanity comprises all forms of

*petty* pride, such as pride of dress in a small sphere, good looks, or cleverness.

<sup>6</sup> By the sinful lusts of the flesh are meant all the corrupt tendencies of our nature. These are tendencies to

- (1) Impurity (Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness).
- (2) Superstition (Idolatry, Witchcraft).
- (3) Sins of Temper (Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife),
- (4) Party Spirit (Seditions, Heresies).
- (5) Uncharitableness (Envyings, Murders).
- (6) Excess (Drunkenness, Revellings).

And such like.

Class (1) contains sins committed *with* one's neighbour.

Class (2).....against God.

Classes (3) (4) (5) .....*against* one's neighbour

Class (6).....against oneself.

So, in the classification of the fruits of the Spirit.

*Love* is a grace exercised mutually between neighbours.

*Joy* and *Peace* are graces exercised towards God.

*Long Suffering, Gentleness,*  
*Goodness, Faith and Meekness* } .....towards our neighbour.

*Temperance*..... towards oneself.

We see from the above how great a mistake is usually made in connecting with the Flesh *only* Sins of Uncleanness.

Read the whole Passage Gal. v. 19—24.

<sup>7</sup> These Articles are summed up in the Creeds.

To believe the things recorded of Our LORD, as *mere events of History*, will avail us nothing. The devils have this faith and tremble. James ii. 19. The devils confessed our Lord to be the Son of God, and dreaded and deprecated the exercise of his power. Mark v. 7. Luke viii. 28.

Every event mentioned in the Creed, is not only an event, but a Doctrine ; that is, it is a fact that has a significance as regards ourselves. If Christ died, it was to make expiation for *our* sins ; if He descended into hell, it was as *our* great High Priest, treading before us the bed of the Dark River ; if He rose, it was that God might signify His acceptance of Christ's Work in *our* behalf ; if He ascended, it was to plead *our* cause with the Father. The facts of the Creed then must be believed as Doctrines in their reference to ourselves. And if believed thus, they will operate upon the heart and character, engendering love of CHRIST and trust in Him, and consequently obedience to Him. " If ye love me, keep my commandments." John xvi. 15.

8 God's Will is one thing ; it prescribes Love—supreme love to God—love to our neighbour as to ourself.

His Commandments are different forms into which his Will throws itself, at the various points where it might be violated. The will is like a paling thrown round an enclosure ; the commandments are the different points at which the enclosure might be broken through.

Hence St. James says ; (ch. ii. 10). " Whosoever shall keep the " whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all ;" i. e. He has put himself outside the whole paling, at whatever point he has stepped out of it.

This will prescribes either the claims of God, or those of man.

I. The claims which God has upon his rational creatures  
are :

1. That they shall worship him *exclusively*<sup>a</sup> (1st com.);
2. That they shall worship Him *spiritually*<sup>b</sup> (2nd com.);
3. That they shall worship Him *continually*, by bearing in mind His presence<sup>c</sup> (3rd com.);
4. That they shall devote a certain portion of time to direct acts of worship<sup>d</sup> (4th com.).

II. The claims which man has upon us are :

1. That we pay a due regard to his rank—the position which he occupies in regard to us in society (5th com.);
2. A due regard to his life and person (6th com.);
3. To his affections<sup>e</sup> (7th com.);
4. To his property (8th com.);
5. To his reputation (9th com.);
6. A restraint upon all thoughts which would lead us to injure him in any of these respects (10th com.)

<sup>9</sup> *To keep* is simply *to observe, be heedful of.*

*To walk in* implies rather the fulfilment of positive duty, than the negative abstinence from breaking the commandments.

<sup>10</sup> “All the *days* of my life.” The word *days* intimates that the service is to be rendered punctually *day by day*, not in a general sense diffused over the whole life.

<sup>a</sup> To the exclusion of Pleasure, Money, Distinction, and all other objects of human pursuit.

<sup>b</sup> Not under the Form of an Image. Not with mere lip service, &c.

<sup>c</sup> This would be an effectual check upon speaking lightly of Him.

<sup>d</sup> Daily prayer (as well as Sunday Worship) is prescribed by the principle of this Commandment.

<sup>e</sup> Chastity is better referred to the third Commandment, which prescribes that we shall hallow God's Name, (i. e. all things connected with Him) and therefore our Bodies, which are Temples of the Holy Ghost.



## ORDER OF CONFIRMATION.

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¶ *Upon the day appointed, all that are to be then confirmed, being placed, and standing in order, before the Bishop: he (or some other Minister appointed by him) shall read this Preface<sup>1</sup> following.*

**T**O the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained: which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to *the years of discretion*, and having learned

what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and<sup>s</sup> consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace<sup>s</sup> of God they will evermore endeavour themselves<sup>s</sup> faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

**D**O ye here, in the presence of God,<sup>s</sup> and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?

¶ *And every one shall audibly<sup>s</sup> answer,*

I do.

*The Bishop.*

**O**UR help is in the Name<sup>7</sup> of the Lord ;

*Answer.* Who hath made heaven and earth.

*Bishop.* Blessed<sup>8</sup> be the Name of the Lord ;

*Answer.* Henceforth, world without end.

*Bishop.* Lord,<sup>9</sup> hear our prayers.

*Answer.* And let our cry come unto thee.

*The Bishop.* Let us pray.<sup>10</sup>

**A**LMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins<sup>11</sup> ; Strengthen<sup>12</sup> them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold<sup>13</sup> gifts of *grace ; the spirit of*<sup>14</sup> wisdom and understand-

ing; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his<sup>15</sup> hand upon the head of<sup>16</sup> every one severally, saying,*

**D**EFEND, O Lord, this thy Child [or *this thy Servant*<sup>17</sup>] with thy heavenly grace,<sup>18</sup> that *he* may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy holy Spirit more and<sup>19</sup> more, until *he* come unto thine everlasting<sup>20</sup> kingdom. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

The Lord<sup>21</sup> be with you.

*Answer.* And with thy spirit.

¶ *And (all kneeling down) the Bishop shall add,*

Let us pray.

**O**UR Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. . And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil. Amen.<sup>22</sup>

*And this Collect.<sup>23</sup>*

**A**LMIGHTY<sup>24</sup> and everliving God, who makest us both to will<sup>25</sup> and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty ; We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy Apostles) *we have now laid our hands, to certify<sup>26</sup> them*

(by this sign) of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be<sup>27</sup> over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth<sup>28</sup> and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

**O** ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, through thy most mighty protection both here and ever, we may be preserved in<sup>29</sup> body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Bishop shall bless<sup>30</sup> them, saying thus,*

**T**HE Blessing<sup>31</sup> of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

¶ *And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready<sup>32</sup> and desirous to be confirmed.*

## NOTES.

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<sup>1</sup> Part of this Preface appeared in King Edward's two Prayer Books in the form of a Rubric.

It is well, before we enter on any solemn office of Religion, to have the design of the office brought before our minds, that we may enter into it the more intelligently. Hence, the introduction of this Preface in the Confirmation Service, as also the opening of the daily Morning and Evening Prayer with an address setting forth the objects of our assembling together, is much to be commended.

<sup>2</sup> “*Mouth and Consent.*”

The first external—the second expressive of inward resolve—*Mouth* corresponds to *ratify*—*Consent* to *confirm*.—The figure is that, which Bengel in the Appendix to his Gnomon calls direct Chiasm, that is, when two pairs of words being employed, the first corresponds to the third, and the second to the fourth.—(See his explanation of the figure.)

<sup>3</sup> “*By the Grace of God.*”

It is well that we are reminded thus early, of the necessity of forming our resolutions in God's strength.

<sup>4</sup> “*Endeavour themselves.*”

To endeavour oneself was in Old English a reflexive verb. Thus we have, “Grant that we may daily *endeavour*



"ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life." (Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter). And in the Ordination Service of Deacons, "I will endeavour myself, the Lord being my helper."

<sup>6</sup> "In the presence of God and of this Congregation."

The people are assembled in Christ's Name, and therefore He, the God-man, according to His promise, is in the midst of them. How should this solemnise the heart of every candidate! he is coming to the feet of the Captain of our salvation, to swear his allegiance.

<sup>6</sup> "Audibly.

So as to be heard. We must not only believe in Christ with the heart, but confess him with the mouth. Rom. x. 9, 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Our help is in the name of the Lord.*

It is fit that the persons to be confirmed should be reminded, at the very opening of the Service, where their true strength lies. "He that trusteth in his own heart" (*i. e.* in his own strength of will and resolution) to fulfil such an engagement as the Baptismal Vow, would indeed be "a fool."

Nay, but trust in His help, who hath stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and who hath laid the foundations of the earth.

The eternal power of God, on which we are here encouraged to lean, is manifested in the works of Creation. Rom. i. 20.

<sup>8</sup> “ *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*”

The moment the mind really turns to God in renunciation of self-dependence, and in true reliance on his aid, help is granted, and we are enabled to say, “ Blessed be the “ name of the Lord,” and to swell that chorus of Praise, which angels and saints are singing, and which shall be prolonged, until its echoes die away in the Hallelujahs of Eternity.

<sup>9</sup> “ *Lord, hear our prayers.*”

What a *fervent* spirit of prayer do these words denote! Come to the Ordinance in a spirit of earnest prayer, determined to overrule every obstacle, which lies between you and CHRIST, and really to reach His Ear—and you shall not fail the Blessing.

<sup>10</sup> “ *Let us pray.*”

*Oremus.* Let us proceed to the Orison. This is a form used in passing from the alternate responsive supplications of the Minister and people (*Preces*) to a prayer said by the Priest alone (*Oratio*), the people responding only *Amen*. It also serves to call for close attention to what follows, and thus in some measure answers to the bell among the Papists, which is rung at the more solemn parts of the mass.

11 "*Sins.*"

The plural shows that *actual* sins are referred to, and not the remission of original Sin in Baptism.

Of course, the assertion that God *has* forgiven the candidates all their sins, proceeds upon the hypothesis (which runs through the whole Prayer Book) that the Ordinance is approached in Repentance and Faith.

12 "*Strengthen them.*"

Palmer says of this Prayer,

"In every ritual now extant, we find a similar form upon this occasion to that of the English, which has been used by our Church for above 1200 years."

13 "*Thy manifold gifts of grace.*"

Septiformem Spiritum.

14 "*The Spirit of Wisdom,*" &c.

Some attempt is made to discriminate these various operations of the Holy Spirit in the Meditations, p. 18, &c.

Comber's method of distinguishing them is here given, which is simpler, and probably truer and better.

"We must not be too curious in the particulars, since many of the words seem synonymous, yet we may thus distinguish these seven gifts ;

1. "The spirit of being wise in spiritual things."

2. "The spirit of apprehending what we are taught."

3. "The spirit of prudent managing all our actions."
4. "The spirit of power to execute all our religious purposes."
5. "The spirit of discerning between good and evil."
6. "The spirit of devotion in God's service."
7. "The spirit of reverence, to be expressed towards God in our whole conversation."

"These are the blessed gifts for which the bishop prays, that we may be wise and apprehensive, prudent and courageous, discreet in our choice, devout in our duties, and pious in our lives; and if these can be obtained, we may be assured all graces will spring from these roots, charity and the love of God, humility and watchfulness, faith and holiness, meekness and patience, temperance and chastity, and what not ?

15 " *Lay his hand upon the head.*"

"The imposition of hands is one of the most ancient ceremonies in the world, observed by Jacob in the giving of his blessing, GEN. xlviii. 14, and by his example ever after practised among the Jews in benedictions, in conferring of all holy offices, NUMB. xxvii. 18, and to many other purposes in their religion; whereupon, our Lord Jesus used it also when he blessed little children, MAT. xix. 13, as well as when he healed the sick, MAT. viii. 15; and the Apostles adopted it to be the rite for communicating the Spirit in confirmation, ACTS viii. 17; which was so regularly observed

“ that it gave name to the whole office, which is called *laying on of hands*, HEB. vi. 2, as we noted before; and not only St. Augustine, but most of the Latin writers call it usually *imposition of hands*; nor was confirmation ever ministered without laying on of hands. And as upon Moses laying his hands upon the seventy elders, God put his spirit upon them, NUMB. xi. 17, so we hope he will impart it to us, when the bishop lays his hand upon us, see NUMB. vi. 27; and therefore we kneel most humbly that we may receive it. It was anciently the manner for the bishop to lay both his hands across on the head of the confirmed, not only in imitation of Jacob, GEN. xviii., but with allusion to the death of Christ, in whom we believe, and from whom we receive the Holy Ghost.”

<sup>16</sup> “ *Every one severally.*”

“ The imposition of hands does not seem, in early times, to have been given to every distinct individual in the Roman Church. The Bishop lifted up his hands over all the candidates at the same time, and blessed them.”  
Palmer's Origines, Vol. ii. p. 200.

<sup>17</sup> “ *Or this thy Servant.*”

The introduction of this clause seems to show that our Confirmation Office was not designed *exclusively* for young people.

<sup>18</sup> “ *With thy heavenly grace.*”

These words show that the blessing supplicated is *spiritual*—has exclusive reference to the soul. If external

protection were supplicated, it would be, "Defend *with thy Providence.*"

<sup>19</sup> "*Daily increase more and more.*"

The notion of daily increase, is simply that something may be added daily. Of daily increase *more and more*, that the increment of to-day may be larger than that of yesterday.

<sup>20</sup> "*Everlasting kingdom.*"

The child has come already to God's kingdom of Grace, that is, the Church—to that kingdom, which was at hand when John the Baptist preached, *Mat. iii. 2.* What is needed is, that by grace he should be brought to the kingdom of *Glory*, which is the *everlasting kingdom.*

<sup>1</sup> "*The Lord be with you.*"

The mutual salutation of the Bishop (or Priest) and people, is derived from a Jewish form of ordinary salutation, slightly altered. Boaz says to his reapers, "The Lord be *with you;*" to which they reply, "The Lord bless thee." When the spiritual dispensation of Christianity was established, and this form grafted into the service of the Church, more of a spiritual character was thrown into the response, by a slight change, which finds its warrant in St. Paul's benediction, *2 Tim. iv. 22,* "The Lord Jesus Christ be with *thy spirit.*" The custom of using this mutual salutation in the Church service is said to be of Apostolical institution. We may remark how, among the Jews, all the courteous phrases of daily life had originally a religious significance.

Christianity mints these phrases afresh, and employs them in Divine Worship. Thus our Lord, in bidding farewell to his Apostles, used the ordinary valedictory formula "Peace I leave with you;" yet He intimated that this formula in His mouth was invested with a new and higher significance, by adding, "*My* peace I give unto you."

In the languages of Christian nations, most forms of salutation and valediction have originally a religious reference; thus Adieu, Addio, Good bye (God be with you) &c. &c.

How completely has the original impression been worn off by constant familiar usage!

22 "*Amen.*"

From the circumstance of the Amen being printed in the ordinary (and not in Italic) Type, it would appear that the Bishop is meant to add the Amen himself. See the Lord's Prayer, as it stands at the beginning of the Communion Service.

This part of the Office partaking of the nature of Prayer and not of Praise, the Lord's Prayer has no doxology annexed to it.

23 "*Collect.*"

9. The word Collect (as applied to certain Prayers and not to others) is variously accounted for.

(1) It is said that the Priest in a Collect collected in one *Oratio* the alternate supplications (*preces*) hitherto made by himself and the people jointly.

(2) From their use in *the Congregation*, which in the Latin was termed *Collecta*, in Greek *σύναξις*.

(3) Because the Collects are general and comprehensive prayers, not designed for some specific purpose, for individuals or classes of individuals, or for special circumstances; but for the whole Church in its normal condition.

(See a full note on the subject in *Greswell on the Burial Service* p. 197. Vol. ii.)

The fact that this Prayer is entitled a Collect seems to conflict with the last explanation, as it has *special reference to the newly-confirmed*.

The explanation of the title, as it stands at the head of the last Collect in the Burial Service, is no doubt that suggested by Shepherd, Vol. xi. p. 441,—“In Edward’s first book, “this prayer was the collect used at the Communion, which “was then celebrated at funerals.”

(4) Because many of the Collects for Sundays and Holy days are collected out of the Epistle and Gospel.

\* \* “*Almighty and everliving God.*”

Remark that one and the same invocation is common to the two principal prayers in this Office.

In an ordinance (generally) connected with youth, there may be a propriety in addressing God as the ever-living One, Who on the one hand is the God of their Fathers, and on the other can watch over them to the end of their pilgrimage.

“And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs



"will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will  
"carry, and will deliver you." ISAIAH xlvi. 4.

<sup>25</sup> " *To will and do.*"

To will what is good, and do what is acceptable to God's  
majesty. Direct chiasm. [See above, Note 2.]

All things intrinsically good are acceptable to God; but  
goodness and acceptability to Him are not the same ideas.

We will by God's preventing } grace.  
We do by his co-operating }

Compare Article x.; "We have no power to do good works  
"pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of Christ  
"preventing us, that we may have a good will, and work-  
"ing with us, when we have that good will."

<sup>26</sup> " *To certify them of thy favour &c.*"

Christ showed his favour to little children, Matt. xix. 15,  
by laying his hands on them, and expressed his love to  
St. John by the same sign, Rev. i. 17. *Comber*. The out-  
ward sign in Confirmation, like the elements in the Sacra-  
ments, and like the rainbow in the Noachic covenant, is  
designed to be a help to faith in God's love.

<sup>27</sup> " *Ever be over them.*"

*Ever*; that is, when my hand is removed, and myself  
withdrawn.

The Bishop sues here for four blessings:

1. A blessing affecting the circumstances and outward  
state of the persons confirmed. Let thy fatherly, &c.
2. A blessing affecting their hearts and inmost souls,—  
the spring of their character. Let thy Holy Spirit, &c.

3. A blessing affecting their minds. Lead them in the knowledge, &c.

4. A blessing affecting their wills. Lead them in the obedience, &c. Again he intimates here,

1. The protection under which they must enter on life.
2. The influence which must guide them.
3. The path in which they must walk.
4. The end to which they must look.

How exceedingly appropriate is it that, as the prayer travels on to this great consummation, "the obtaining of life everlasting;" it should begin with the earliest work of Grace upon the heart, the turning of the will. This first movement of the will is like the springing up, in the heart of a desert, of a rill of living water. At first it is but a narrow stream,

"Streaking the heath-clad hill  
With a bright emerald thread;"

But, as it flows on, it enlarges its borders, and fertilizes the country on its brink, and with strong and broad current, seeks its issue in the Ocean. Such is the course of grace, from its first preventing movement in the heart, to its ultimate outlet in glory.

28 "*Liveth and reigneth.*"

This close of the Collect, and the Versicle *Blessed be the name of the Lord* are the only parts of the Service which seem to partake of the tone of praise and adoration.

29 "*May be preserved in body and soul.*"

This Collect, taken from the end of the Communion Ser-

vice, was added to the Confirmation Office at the revision, in 1861.

Cyril says, "The sacred rite of Confirmation is the "spiritual *phylactery of the body*, and the conservator of the "soul."

The last clause is thus neatly expressed in the original, which has been used in the English Church from the 6th century to the present time:

"ut, hic et in æternum te auxiliante, sani et salvi esse mereamur."

In the former part of the Collect, *direct* (*dirigere*) will apply to *hearts*; *govern* (*regere*) to *bodies*; *sanctify* (*sanctificare*) to both. (A species of Chiasm [See Note 2.]

We *direct* that which has intelligence;

We *govern* our limbs and animal nature.

Does any one object to the notion that the body may be *sanctified*, as well as the soul? Refer for the warrant of this notion to: "The very God of peace *sanctify* you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and *body* may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. v. 23." Nothing which is not sanctified can have a share in the resurrection, and therefore, as our bodies are to rise, they must be sanctified—instrumentally, by ourselves "keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection,"—but by the Holy Spirit as the originating cause, prompting and blessing this self-control, and ultimately raising up the body from corruption in the grave. Thus, at the close of this sublime Service, the eternal union

of the believer's body and soul in incorruption, is brought into view.

Had our reformers maintained the triple division of human nature found in 1 Thess. V. the word

*direct* would have applied well to *spirit* ;

*sanctify* ..... to *soul* ;

*govern* ..... to *body* ;

But the distinction would have been too subtle to be generally apprehended.

Observe the practical implication in this Collect, that if we desire God's protection, it is only to be had by walking "in the ways of his laws, and in the works of his commandments."

30 "*Bless them.*"

A blessing is an intercessory prayer, offered by one who has authority over us, either in virtue of 1, his office ; 2, his age ; 3, his relationship or position in the social system.

31 "*The blessing &c.*"

This is the latter half of the Benediction at the close of the Communion. The former part—"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," is omitted. The peace of God is the blessing annexed to the duty of making known our requests to God by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. (See Phil. iv. 6, 7.) The Communion Office is regarded as the Liturgy, or the Church's great Form of

Prayer, and as such the blessing covenanted to Prayer is invoked on the persons joining in it.

Here the idea of the ordinance is simple Benediction.

Observe also that *upon you* is substituted for *among you*. *Among you* implies a gathering of persons in Christ's Name, such as is essential to the Communion.

*Upon you* rather brings out the idea of the blessing resting on each individual head.

<sup>32</sup> "*Ready and desirous.*"

"The words *ready and desirous* were added at the last Review in compliance with the request of the Presbyterian Divines, that Confirmation might not be made so necessary to the Holy Communion, as that none should be admitted to it unless they had been Confirmed," *Shepherd*.

We find however a similar clause introduced into the Rubric of the Manuals of Sarum and York.

"Nullus debet admitti ad Sacramentum Corporis et Sanguinis J. C. extra mortis articulum, " nisi fueri confirmatus, vel a receptione Sacramenti Confirmationis fuerit rationabiliter impeditus."

It is surely of importance to recognise the principle that, where people are precluded from any ordinance by unavoidable necessity, a gracious God, who is altogether independent of Ordinances, will supply the lack of it.

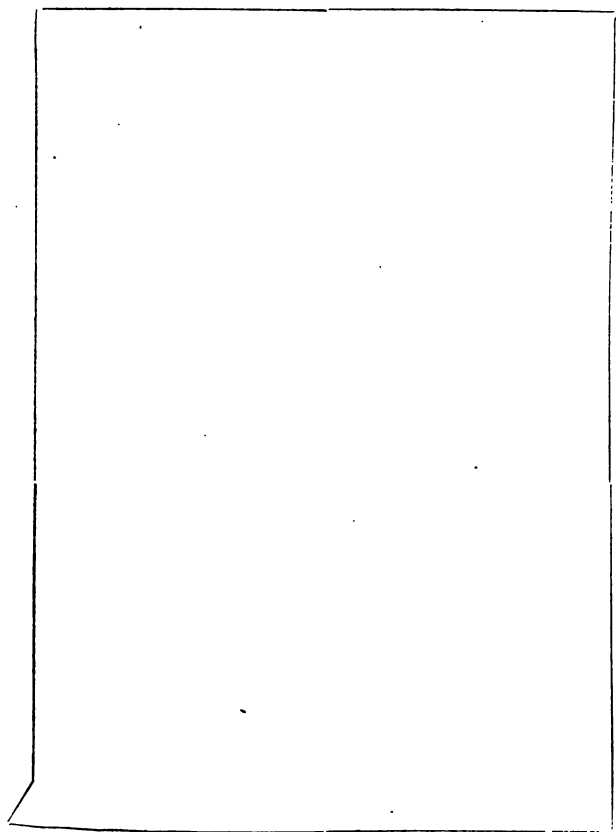
III.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

On Passages of Holy Scripture,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE ORDINANCE OF

CONFIRMATION.



# MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

ON PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE ORDINANCE OF CONFIRMATION.

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## I.—The Ordinance.

### I.

ACTS viii. 14—17. *Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John : who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost : for as yet he was fallen upon none of them ; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

**L**ORD, I pray for myself, and for all who shall be confirmed with me, that we, through the laying



on of hands, may receive the Holy Ghost. I believe that the sign, which thine Apostles have ordained, is not a bare ceremony, but an effectual means of grace, to such as do receive it with an earnest and sincere purpose of turning to Thee. Yet is this Ordinance (like others) a mere channel of grace, which, except thou replenish it out of thy fullness, must prove dry and empty. Therefore did the Apostles, and therefore doth the Bishop (in imitation of the Apostles) pray before administering it, acknowledging thereby that themselves are but instruments, and that all the virtue is from thee. But the prayer even of pastors and parents will not avail us aught, except we pray for ourselves. Therefore, Lord, as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; so give now thy Spirit unto us that ask; let us that seek, find; open the gate unto us that knock, that we may receive in this Ordinance thy heavenly Benediction, and may come to the eternal Kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord.

## II.

ACTS ix. 12, 17, 18. *Behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. . . . And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith.*

**I** MUST pray in prospect of this Ordinance, if I desire the blessing which it was designed to convey. I cannot profit by it, except I enter upon it in a spirit of prayer and serious meditation. Lord, dispose me to enter into my closet, and shut the door, and pray unto thee, my Father, who seest in secret. I am blind and ignorant. May spiritual sight be given me by means of this Ordinance. There is a film upon the natural mind, wherewith the god of this world hath blinded it, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine in upon it. Lord, open mine eyes to the great evil of sin, and to thy great love as manifested in Christ.

## III.

GEN. xlviii. 8—16. *And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. (Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see.) And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which re-*

*deemed me from all evil, bless the lads ; and let my name be named on them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac ; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*

**A**S Joseph presented his sons to Jacob, so my parents, in this Ordinance, present me to the Bishop, and through him to Christ. My father commits me to the God of my fathers, that I may receive His Benediction, and go forth in his Name. If my parents are absent in body, they are present in spirit, and I will think of them as offering me upon the Altar of God, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto the Most High. And I will think of God, under that touching and tender title as “ the God before whom my fathers did walk ” — who ministered to them support in trial, grace in temptation, and comfort in trouble. May I find grace to walk after their example, setting God always before me, and being continually mindful of his presence.

## IV.

\* PSALM xxvii. 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will gather me. (take me up).*

THESE words have reference to the office of the three tribes who came in the rear of Israel's march through the wilderness, and whose duty it was to gather up the sick and feeble,—those who had been dropped on the burning sand.

An hour must come, when my father and my mother will forsake me, will go on before me into the unseen world, and leave me to battle single-handed with Life. May GOD prove himself to me a Father of the fatherless, when that hour comes!

But, before that time arrives, growing years will bring with them many opportunities, when I must act for myself and bear my own burden.

On this solemn occasion I must come out and separate myself from under the shadow of my parents, and profess for myself my choice of Christ's Service. Lord, fold me under the wing of thy Pro-

vidence ; gather me into the bosom of thy Love, and thus carry me through the wilderness of this world.

## V.

I SAM. iii. 10. *And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak ; for thy servant heareth.*

**G**OD called me when an infant by the waters of Baptism, over which my Christian Name was first pronounced. Many a time and oft has he called me by his Holy Spirit, moving in my conscience, since I have been able to apprehend and respond to the call. How have I drowned his still small voice, by plunging into the din of worldly vanities and excitements. And now he calls me more solemnly than ever in this Ordinance of Confirmation. I will turn to him with a listening ear and an obedient heart, saying, " Speak, Lord ; for thy servant heareth."

He calls me by *name*. He knows my past history, the secret of my character, the recesses of my heart. My faults are not hid from him. " Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thoughts long before."

If I follow his footsteps through my pilgrimage, I shall enjoy the blessed privilege of having an Almighty and Sympathising Friend, before whom I may unburden my heart with the fullest assurance of being understood.

Grant O Lord that I may forthwith give up myself obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments. May I make haste and prolong not the time to keep thy law.

## VI.

ST. LUKE x. 5, 6. *And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.*

**E**VEN the Benediction of the Apostles had no salutary effect upon those, in whom was found no rudiment of a right mind. It abode only upon those houses, wherein a son of peace dwelt. Let me not think that Confirmation and the Blessing of the Bishop will act as a spell, independently of the state of mind in which I receive it.

The Dove of Divine Peace issues forth from all the Ordinances of the Church, as the literal dove issued from the Ark of Noah; but peace lights not except upon a prepared heart, even as the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot in the waste of waters. Lord, prepare my heart to receive the blessing.

## VII.

EPH. 1. 13. *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

**T**O hear the word of truth is the first stage in the process of human salvation. Have I heard it with seriousness and attention? Have I listened intelligently to Christian instruction? And diligently compared what I have heard with the sure words of Holy Scripture?

To trust in CHRIST is the second stage, and this is that to which the hearing of the word of truth should



lead. Am I trusting to Christ for pardon, grace, and strength? looking to Him for happiness?

But there is a yet further stage, to which I am called in the Ordinance of Confirmation; for the Disciples, after they had become believers, had need to have their blindness enlightened, and their weakness confirmed, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them at Pentecost. This stamped them as God's own—the visible mark of holiness thus impressed upon them authenticated them to the world as his.

Lord, make me henceforth decided in my Christian profession. Seal me with thy Spirit in the rite of Confirmation; impress upon my heart thine Image, and give me, even here below, the earnest and foretaste of spiritual joys.

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### II.—The Qualifications.

#### I.

2 KINGS ix. 32. *Who is on my side, Who?*

“**T**HE Ark, and Israel and Judah” (The Church of God) “abide in tents” (in the

tabernacle of a sinful mortal body) “and my lord Joab and the servants of my Lord” (Christ and his true people) “are encamped in the open field” (of the world),—waging a spiritual war against those three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Captain of our Salvation cries to us, as we enter upon life, Who is on my side? Who?

Lord, I would be on thy side. I would declare for thee this day, I would take my oath of allegiance to thee as my Captain, I would enlist under thy banner of the cross. Oh! let me never desert it, but make me thy faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

## II.

ACTS v. 1—11. *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was*

*sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

**I** PROFESS, in Confirmation, to be giving my whole heart to God. How awful to make such a

profession, if I am reserving part of it for self and the world! if there is a single wrong habit or practice, which I desire to retain! or a single known duty, which I cannot resolve in God's strength to fulfil! What is this but keeping back part of the price, and bringing a certain part, and laying it at the feet of the Church's Rulers. Lord, deliver me from the hypocrisy of Ananias. Make my devotion unreserved and entire; help me to sacrifice every cherished lust upon thine Altar, and to put my whole body, soul, and spirit, at thy disposal.

## III.

ISAIAH xliv. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

**W**ITH trembling hand, O Lord, I subscribe my name among the number of thy followers. Pour out upon me that Spirit, which alone can make me do this in truth and heart's uprightness. And may my name be never blotted out of thy Book, by

my faithlessness and disobedience. Make me to be numbered among thy saints in glory everlasting.

## IV.

1 KINGS xviii. 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?*

REV. iii. 16. *So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

THE service of God is inconsistent with the service of the world. The giving of half a heart is an insult to God, since it acknowledges his claim, without satisfying it. Lord, deliver me from lukewarmness and vacillation, and make me constant and resolute in thy Service. I must beware how I approach this ordinance in a spirit of luke-warmness; for that would ensure my rejection.

It must be my aim not merely to live as creditably as those around me, not merely to maintain a fair exterior and a freedom from gross sin, but to throw my heart and soul into Christ's service.

Lord, deliver me from that subtle spirit of self-complacency and self-satisfaction, which is the source of lukewarmness. Make me to know and feel that I need thy wealth to enrich me, thy light to illuminate me, communion with Thee to make me happy, the raiment of thy righteousness to cover me. Make me to forget the things which are behind, and to reach forth to those which are before, and to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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### III.—The Gift.

THE GIFT WHICH IS PRAYED FOR IN CONFIRMATION, AND WHICH MAY BE EXPECTED FROM IT, WHEN DULY ADMINISTERED AND DULY RECEIVED, is described as

The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding;  
The Spirit of Counsel and Ghostly Strength;  
The Spirit of Knowledge and true Godliness;  
And the Spirit of Holy Fear.

1. *Wisdom.* (ΣΟΦΙΑ.) The discernment, communicated by the Spirit, of the deep things of God. He who has this discernment sees a significance in those mysteries, which were accounted foolishness by the heathen philosophers, and which, in the mind of the merely nominal Christian, are barren dogmas, held in the memory according to the form of words which expresses them, but without efficacy on the heart.

1 COR. ii. 6—10. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.*

2. *Understanding.* (ΣΥΝΕΣΙΣ). The power of apprehending, going along with, and intelligently assenting to, spiritual instruction, whether given through the Word of God, or in any other form.

ST. LUKE xxiv. 25. *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*

3. *Counsel.* (ΒΟΥΛΗ). has reference to difficulties. As, where two principles of duty lead us in different directions, it is the part of the Spirit of Counsel to adjust them, and make the right path clear. Or, when circumstances arise, in which Christian discretion no less than zeal is demanded, it is the part of the Spirit of Counsel to discern the difficulties, and point out how they may be met.

4. *Ghostly strength.* (ΙΣΧΥΣ). The Holy Spirit, in his antagonism to temptation and his resistance to sin, is a Spirit of ghostly strength.



5. *Knowledge.* (ΓΝΩΣΙΣ). As Wisdom has reference to thought, and Understanding to apprehension, so Knowledge to memory. It is the having the mind filled with Divine Truth, as an armoury is filled with arms, or a repository with stores, which may be drawn forth as the emergency arises.

6. *Godliness.* (ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑ). Godliness is a continual reference of the mind to God, to his Will and Word. It involves a constant sense of the Divine Presence; an asking, before we take in hand any new enterprise, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?—a renunciation of the maxims of the world, and an adoption of the views laid down in Holy Scripture.

7. *The fear of the Lord.* (ΦΟΒΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ.) Holy Awe. Without this crowning grace, the other gifts of the Spirit might minister to pride. Man is so corrupt as to be proud, not only of his intellectual, but even of his spiritual attainments. The Spirit of *the Fear of the Lord* tempers and chastens the other

graces, as the dark rays in the sunbeam temper and chasten the brilliancy of the other rays.

NOTE. It is remarkable that only six manifestations of the Spirit of Grace are mentioned in the original Hebrew of Isaiah xi. 2., and accordingly, only six are named in our Authorised Version, which is translated from the original. The LXX insert ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑ in the list, thereby making seven,— a number which harmonises well with the emblem of the Holy Spirit in the book of the Revelation : *I saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*—REV. iv. 5.

VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS.

COME, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart.

Thy blessed Unction from above,  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love :  
Enable with perpetual light  
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of thy grace ;  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home ;  
Where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And Thee, of both, to be but One,—  
That, through the ages all along,  
This may be our endless song,

PRAISE TO THY ETERNAL MERIT,  
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

## XV.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE YOU RECEIVE THE LAYING ON OF HANDS, SAY SECRETLY IN YOUR HEART THE FOLLOWING WORDS, WHICH YOU ARE RECOMMENDED TO COMMIT TO MEMORY PREVIOUSLY :

*The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.*  
1 KINGS xviii. 24.

**L**ORD, I offer myself, body, soul, and spirit, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee. Accept me through thy Son Jesus Christ, (the True Altar, which alone can sanctify my gift) and answer me, O Lord, by the fire of the Holy Ghost, sent down into my heart to consume my corruptions, to enlighten my dark mind, to warm my cold affections, and to kindle in me heavenly zeal and love, for Christ's sake. *Amen, and Amen.*

## V.—Subsequent Conduct.

## I.

ECCLES. v. 4, 5. *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.*

DEUT. xxiii. 21—23. *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.*

I HAVE made a vow to the heart searching God, and he will surely require the fulfilment of it.

I must not *defer* to pay it. I must be on my guard against that tendency of the heart, which leads us to postpone to a more favourable opportunity the carrying out of our good intentions. I must begin this day, this hour: for the present alone is ours. Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. I will make haste and prolong not the time to keep thy commandments, O Lord.

And again, I must not *slack* to pay it. I must be earnest, diligent persevering, not considering how little I can do for God consistently with my vow, but rather how much I may do for Him, who has done all for me. May my loins be girded about, and my light burning, and I myself like one who waits for his Lord.

Make me mindful, O Lord, that by my own voluntary act thy vows are upon me. If without my consent I was brought to Baptism, this step at least has been taken of my own free choice. One tie more now binds me to the service of CHRIST, and to the prosecution of my own true happiness.

## II.

HEB. vi. 1, 2. *Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

THE Laying on of Hands is but a *principle* of the doctrine of Christ. This Rite of Confirmation therefore justly stands at the threshold of life, when its more serious responsibilities and its more seductive temptations are just about to open upon us. How foolish then is the notion that all the work of grace which has to be accomplished upon my heart has been accomplished now—that I am to acquiesce in my present standard of holiness, and not rather look to receive out of CHRIST'S fulness grace for grace. Let me be assured that the Holy Spirit is a well of water springing up into everlasting life—daily gushing forth therefore with fresh current in the heart of those who receive him. And let the whole *economy of animal and vegetable life* teach me that

in spiritual things also there is no life, where there is no growth! Grant, Lord, that from the light and strength this day imparted to me, I may go on to higher degrees of light and strength, growing always in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, until I come to thine everlasting kingdom.

III.

1 TIM. vi. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

I WAS called to eternal life in my Baptism. I have now professed the pursuit of it in the Congregation, among whom CHRIST is present. And now the Ordinance is ended, and I am withdrawn from observation. The eyes of those who witnessed my Confirmation, are upon me no longer. Nevertheless, a great cloud of witnesses compasses me about, —God, and Christ, and holy Angels, and, it may be,



the spirits of just men made perfect, look down upon the battle field in which I am engaged. Lord, put on me thine armour,—the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation,—so that in thy strength I may have victory and triumph against sin, the world, and the devil.

## IV.

EPH. iv. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

I HAVE been sealed this day with the Holy Spirit of God. May I ever remember how high is the privilege and how awful the responsibility of having such a Gift dwelling in me! The Spirit of God is a Divine Person, Who can be grieved by my resistance to convictions, and angered by my perversity. Lord, may I hate and renounce the sins which make Thee mourn. As the flame of a lamp is a delicate thing, and may easily be extinguished by exposure to a rude breath of wind, so the light of the Spirit

may be easily quenched by heedlessly plunging into worldly excitements. May I fan the flame daily by Prayer, Meditation, and Holy Reading, and a diligent application to all the means of grace.

## V.

1 COR. xi. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

**I**F I would come holy and clean to that heavenly Feast, in the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture, I must search and examine my own conscience. Help me, Lord, to do this faithfully and thoroughly. Lend me the light of thy Spirit and of thy word, to explore thereby the recesses of my character. Put me on my guard against the deceitfulness of my heart, and help me to discover and correct all my secret faults, for Christ's sake. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting.

## VI.

DEUT. xxvi. 17—19. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.*

**G**ÓD has entered into a solemn covenant with me this day. The terms on his part are high and distinguished blessing, transcending all imagination and power of words—on my part they are these—“to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.” What does He require of me, which does not conduce to my happiness as well as to his own glory? What, which He does not offer me grace to carry out? Lord, let thine hand help me, for I have chosen thy *commandments*. As for me, I will serve the Lord.

## VII.

JUDGES xi. 35. *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.*

IT is possible the Service of Christ may require of me some sacrifice painful to flesh and blood. It *does* require the sacrifice of every cherished lust, though prized as a right eye or a right hand. But my vow is upon me, and I cannot go back. No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. It is my comfort to know that he makes no demand upon me, which he does not give me the strength to fulfil. Nor need I be disquieted about difficulties which may arise in future. The grace to meet them will come with them. We are too apt to cry in dismay, Who shall roll me away the stone? when we ought to march on bravely in the path of present duty, and so, when we come up with the stone, should find that it *was* rolled away. Lord, as of old thou badest the Israelites go forward, when they stood on the brink of the Red Sea, so Thou biddest

me go forward, under thy auspices, upon the waves of this troublesome world. Hold thou me up, O Jesus, and I shall walk upon the waters in safety.

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### A Short Prayer

WHICH MAY BE USED IN CONTEMPLATION OF THE  
JOURNEY OF LIFE.

**L**ET thy mighty hand, O Lord, be ever with me for my protection, thy mercy in Christ for my salvation, thy unerring Word for my instruction, the grace of thy quickening Spirit for my consolation, even unto the end, and in the end. *Amen.*

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